United Nations A/C.2/62/SR.26

General Assembly
Sixty-second session

Official Records

Distr.: General
18 December 2007

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 26th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 13 November 2007, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Lintonen ..... (Finland)

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07-59554 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 51: Information and communication technologies for development (*continued*) (A/C.2/62/L.28)

Draft resolution on information and communication technologies for development

1. **Mr. Ayub** (Pakistan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/62/L.28 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Agenda item 57: Groups of countries in special situations (*continued*)

(b) Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation (*continued*) (A/C.2/62/L.29)

Draft resolution on groups of countries in special situations: specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation

2. **Mr. Ayub** (Pakistan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/62/L.29 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Despite some progress on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, a number of inadequacies remained and landlocked countries still faced problems owing to the lack of satisfactory transit transport infrastructure and cumbersome procedures and regulations.

Agenda item 58: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (*continued*) (A/C.2/62/L.30)

Draft resolution on the proclamation of the second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)

3. **Mr. Ayub** (Pakistan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/62/L.30 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Poverty eradication was the greatest challenge of the current time. At the current pace, most countries and regions would not achieve Goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. As part of the broader objective of poverty eradication, the Group supported the proclamation of the second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017).

(b) Women in development (*continued*) (A/C.2/62/L.31)

Draft resolution on women in development

4. **Mr. Ayub** (Pakistan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/62/L.31 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The empowerment of women remained central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Goal 1, on eradicating poverty, and Goal 3, on promoting gender equality and empowering women, were inextricably linked.

(c) Human resources development (*continued*) (A/C.2/62/L.32)

Draft resolution on human resources development

5. **Mr. Ayub** (Pakistan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/62/L.32 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Noting that human resources development was central to any development process, he said that the various draft resolutions he had introduced reiterated the Group's common vision and called on the international community to implement agreed commitments.

Agenda item 60: Training and research: United Nations Institute for Training and Research (A/62/377)

6. **Mr. Lopes** (Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)) said that the Institute currently trained over 40,000 beneficiaries in the areas of diplomacy, peace and security; sustainable development and environment; and information and communications technology. Owing principally to special project grants, the Institute was financially stable, its total income for the current biennium standing at just over $29 million. However, core diplomacy training, for which there was continuous demand by diplomatic communities in all places where the United Nations was represented, was not covered

by those monies and was therefore currently provided through deficit spending. Without United Nations support for such training in the future, the Institute's ability to offer it was at risk.

7. A new chapter in the Institute's history had begun. The catalysts for change were as much about what UNITAR had the potential to become, as they were about what Member States needed it to be. For that reason, the Institute was undergoing a fundamental shift in focus. Its message had traditionally been one of substance — in other words, offering training and research on matters of relevance to social and economic development, and peace and security. In future, the Institute's raison d'être would be tied to methodology. It must focus on those areas where the United Nations system needed it most and on which it could deliver based on its endogenous strengths.

8. While many United Nations entities offered training on themes of relevance to their respective mandates, none offered expertise on how best to deliver that training, capture and retain knowledge, and build upon it. The Institute's calling was to buttress the United Nations system through a more systematic and strengthened capacity development infrastructure. UNITAR must concentrate on how to deliver adult training and professional learning, monitor and evaluate their impact on behaviour, and capitalize on capacity development. By doing so, it would contribute exponentially to the United Nations system as a whole.

9. Over the next two years, the Institute would transform itself into the partner of choice on training methodologies and a centre of excellence, measured by international standards, recognized within and outside the United Nations system, for standard-setting methodologies, high-quality training and research capacity on knowledge systems.

10. The strategic priorities developed during his first months at UNITAR could broadly be summarized as strengthening institutional capacity for training and research; enhancing human capital; building and strengthening strategic partnerships; and rationalizing the organizational structure. Those reform proposals had been endorsed by the UNITAR Board of Trustees in July 2007 and welcomed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/62/377). A second stage of the reform package would be presented to the Board at an extraordinary session to be held in Rabat in December. Internal reforms at UNITAR had begun in August. The Institute would embark on its medium-term reform plan as of 1 January 2008 for the next biennium period.

11. The Institute's first objective was to be the calling card of the United Nations system when it came to cutting edge adult training and professional learning. As part of the overall exercise to consolidate the Organization's work, avoid duplication and strengthen intra-operability, the Institute had established a new partnerships section at UNITAR headquarters. The Institute would strengthen its affiliations with strategic partners within the United Nations and offer its support in delivering the highest quality training and capacity development activities. The Institute was also sensitive to the ongoing review of mandates and the need to align the mandates of the seven entities responsible for United Nations training and research. "Delivering as one" applied as much to training and research as to operations. UNITAR stood ready to play a guiding role in the exercise and provide the vision and necessary support for its implementation.

12. The Institute's second objective was to improve the quality of its deliverables. In part, that entailed guidance and a narrow reliance on a network of world-renowned academic institutions representing pre-eminent scholarly thinking worldwide. Close affiliation with such a network would serve three purposes. First, the UNITAR certification process would be completely revamped so as to ensure that all accreditation, including certification for adult training and professional learning, would be undertaken in collaboration with the network. As such, UNITAR certification would also mean Columbia University, Cape Town University and Sciences Po in Paris endorsement. The value of UNITAR certificates would therefore translate into both diplomatic and academic currencies. Second, the network would assist UNITAR in reformulating its research mandate on training and capacity-development methodologies. Effective implementation could not take place without empirical work on how best to train beneficiaries. As part of the reform process, a new research department was being established that would be dedicated to that cause and work in close consultation with the academic world. Third, the network would co-design and supervise all current and future curriculum and methodologies, in cooperation with the Institute's newly established training department.

13. The Institute's third objective was to mobilize the necessary support from Member States to boost its

capacities to provide essential training in the area of diplomacy, peace and security. While the Institute had been receiving increasing support from all sectors for its special projects, its core diplomatic training activities, on which so many diplomats depended, continued to operate on a deficit basis and were therefore at risk. While the Institute's Statute suggested that its training activities supported first and foremost developing countries' diplomatic corps, a considerable number of developed countries also benefited from them. In New York, almost as many "rich country" permanent missions sent their staff on UNITAR training as did "poor country" missions. It seemed only right that the Institute should receive support for its work in that area. Since charging per course placed a disproportionate burden on developing countries, the General Assembly should consider a modest annual subvention to cover that service. In view of the explicit endorsement in the Secretary-General's report, he was confident that the Committee's discussions on the issue would result in a just and satisfactory outcome.

14. The elements he had described would help the Institute become the true "training arm" of the United Nations system. The three axes of support — the United Nations system, the academic world and Member States — were vital as the Institute embarked on the current new chapter in its existence.

15. **Mr. Garnier** (Switzerland) said that the reforms envisaged would enable UNITAR to respond to the training and research needs of the United Nations and its users more effectively. However, such reforms must be carried out in consultation with the United Nations University (UNU) in Tokyo and the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC) in Turin. In particular, UNU should continue to focus on research, UNSSC on training United Nations staff, and UNITAR on training Member States' representatives, in order to ensure coherence and complementarity. Within such a framework, UNITAR could continue to provide tailor-made services to both Member States and United Nations entities.

16. He encouraged countries not already doing so to contribute to the General Fund. UNITAR provided an important service to the United Nations system and Member States, in particular by organizing free courses for diplomats. Such activities could not survive without a substantial General Fund.

17. **Mr. Lopes** (Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director, UNITAR) agreed that UNU, UNSSC and UNITAR had quite different mandates. If there were to be any overlapping of functions, it would be between UNU and UNITAR, in the area of research. However, that was not the case, as the focus of the Institute's new work on research was methodology, which was not a UNU competence. UNITAR was aware of the need to identify possible areas of overlap between the two institutions. The fact that the Executive Director of UNITAR was a member of the Council of UNU ensured a permanent relationship between the two.

18. As for UNSSC, it had just been decided that he would serve as Director of the College for a transitional period. The fact that both institutions would, for a time, be headed by the same person would enable synergies to be established, particularly with regard to the development of methodologies. It was clear, however, that the primary role of UNITAR was to provide training for Member States and the primary role of UNSSC to provide training for senior United Nations staff.

19. **The Chairperson** invited the Committee to engage in a general discussion on the item.

20. **Mr. Ayub** (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed support for the Institute's goal of becoming a centre of excellence for standard-setting methodologies, high-quality training and research capacity on knowledge systems, but stressed that UNITAR programmes and activities should give priority to the training and capacity-building needs of developing countries. The Group of 77 and China appreciated the training opportunities that UNITAR provided to developing country diplomats and agreed that it should be given more resources, including through the United Nations regular budget.

21. **Mr. Owoseni** (Nigeria) said that his Government attached great importance to the Institute's training and research activities and would support it in achieving its goal of becoming a centre of excellence. He noted with satisfaction that the new leadership had formulated a strategic reform plan to build on UNITAR achievements and expressed support for General Assembly resolution 60/213, which reaffirmed the relevance of UNITAR and reiterated that training and capacity development should be accorded a more

visible and larger role. He was confident that the reforms envisaged would enable UNITAR to deliver its services more efficiently in the years ahead.

22. The Institute's extensive training activities benefited developed and developing countries alike. African policymakers, representatives, envoys of the Secretary-General, and practitioners and students of peacekeeping had all benefited from UNITAR training programmes. The Institute's training programmes for diplomats of missions accredited to United Nations Headquarters and the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi warranted special mention. His Government expected the Field Office established by UNITAR in Port Harcourt in 2006 to become a regional centre of excellence that would serve West Africa.

23. The Institute's low funding levels remained a matter of concern. The most effective way to ensure adequate, stable and predicable funding was to finance its core training activities from the United Nations regular budget. Nigeria both benefited from the Institute's training programmes and contributed regularly to its funding through an interest-yielding deposit account set up as a trust fund under the Institute. He encouraged other Member States that were able to do so to embrace similar funding methods or gestures of support. In that respect, his delegation supported the recommendations contained in paragraphs 47 and 48 of the report.

24. **Mr. Tekneci** (Turkey) said that his delegation was pleased that an increasing number of people benefited from UNITAR activities through workshops, seminars, fellowships and field-based capacity-building, and that all programmes were self-funded.

25. The Institute's continuing close work with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, described in paragraph 22 of its report (A/62/377), was a very positive development. He recalled, however, that, during the Committee's consideration of the item at the General Assembly's previous session, the Turkish delegation had expressed serious concern about the content of some UNITAR course materials. At its request, some changes had been made. However, the material in question was still not objective, accurate, unbiased and scientific.

26. He reiterated the urgent need for better screening of the content of the Institute's course materials. Turkey strongly believed that the Institute should uphold the principles of objectivity and credibility in its activities. The Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations Office at Geneva was already in touch with UNITAR and would be following the issue closely.

27. **Mr. Soetarto** (Indonesia) said that the liberalization of trade and investment and rapid advances in information and communications technologies had produced massive movements of people, finances, goods and information, leading to economic growth and higher standards of living on the one hand, but inequalities, environmental degradation and international organized crime on the other. Furthermore, the number of countries affected by regional and internal conflicts was on the rise. Such challenges demanded an inclusive international dialogue capable of producing effective solutions. To achieve that, a supportive and sustained training environment was essential.

28. UNITAR had a distinguished record of helping countries gain a better grasp of global issues and acquire the skills needed to address them. His Government appreciated the Institute's emphasis on providing a high level of sustainable skills development for core diplomatic training. The Key Migration Issues Workshop Series organized in 2006 had been instrumental in enriching delegates' knowledge, contributing to the success of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development and garnering consensus on resolutions on the issue.

29. UNITAR must be given adequate financial support. The Institute's commitment to being a centre of excellence must be met with international backing. Voluntary contributions to the General Fund were still alarmingly low and must be replenished and mobilized. Greater consideration should also be given to providing more stable support to UNITAR through the United Nations regular budget.

30. **Mr. Blas** (Philippines) said that his delegation was committed to helping UNITAR achieve its goal of becoming a centre of excellence for high-quality training and research capacity on knowledge systems.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.